

Healthy Teeth for Healthy Smiles



Baby teeth are important even though they will be lost. They are needed for chewing, speech, appearance, and straight and healthy permanent teeth.

The baby who goes to bed with a bottle can get painful tooth decay. Their teeth can be difficult to fill and may become infected. **This causes the baby much pain.** The teeth may have to be taken out. When baby teeth are lost early, there is an increased chance for the child to have crooked permanent teeth.



Proper use of the bottle is the first step to preventing dental problems and tooth decay.

- * Bottles are used to feed babies who are not yet able to drink from a cup.
- * Feed only formula, breast milk, or water from a bottle. Sugar water, sweetened fruit drinks and soda pop will cause your child's teeth to decay.
- * Offer the bottle only at feeding times. Do not let baby carry a bottle around at other times. A bottle is not a toy or a pacifier.
- * Offer a blanket, stuffed animal or favorite toy instead of a bottle at sleep time. Do not put baby to bed with a bottle.
- * If a baby needs a bottle to fall asleep, fill it with cool plain water or use a pacifier. Do not use sugar or honey in the bottle.
- * Clean your baby's teeth after each feeding using a clean, cool, wet washcloth.
- * When your child reaches two years old, take him/her for their first dental visit.



Adapted from pamphlets from the Cherokee Nation WIC Program and the California Department of Health Services.



KDHE-Nutrition & WIC, 1000 SW Jackson, Ste 220, Topeka, KS 66612-1274